AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sealing a package, comprising a sealing unit and an abutment between which a number of material layers are disposed to be clamped and sealed and fused together, the abutment is connected to at least one elongate element which extends in a direction from the abutment towards and past the sealing unit, the at least one elongate element, beyond the sealing unit is disposed to be connected to at least one first operating element, and an operating unit is disposed to apply a force between the sealing unit and said first operating element so that ~~these~~ the sealing unit and the first operating element are displaced in a direction from one another and so that the abutment and the sealing unit are displaced in a direction towards one another, wherein the force from the operating unit is applied to the sealing unit by the intermediary of a second operating element comprising at least one force-restricting coupling member which is disposed to restrict force between the second operating element and the sealing unit and thereby ~~the~~ force between the abutment and the sealing unit.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the second operating element comprises at least a first and a second component, the first component being disposed to at least partly surround the second component and the force-restricting coupling member, the coupling member being disposed to

apply a force between the first and second components so that ~~these~~ the first and second components strive to be urged away from one another, and ~~this~~ the striving to be urged away from one another is restricted by a portion of the first component which surrounds the second component and is disposed to abut against the second component.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said coupling member comprises a membrane whose outward flexing is disposed to be operated by a pressurised fluid.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the operating unit comprises an interconnection member displaceable substantially transversely of ~~the~~ a direction of movement of the sealing unit and the abutment, the interconnection unit being~~, on the one hand,~~ connected to the sealing unit by the intermediary of a first linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and ~~that of said~~ the intermediary of first and second components of the second operating element which is not connected to the sealing unit and which~~, on the other hand,~~ is connected to the first operating element by the intermediary of a second linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and the second operating element.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second operating element is slidably connected to said at least one elongate element.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the operating unit is disposed, in a nominal end position, to converge the sealing unit and the abutment to such an extent that a gap is formed between them, said gap being of a width which is less than a total thickness of ~~those~~ material layers which are intended to be sealed and fused together~~, and preferably less than the total thickness of those material layers which are intended to be sealed and fused together which are~~ obtained when the sealing unit and the abutment are urged towards one another with a force which is defined by a force-restricting coupling member.

7-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sealing a package comprising a sealing unit and an abutment between which a number of material layers are disposed to be clamped and sealed and fused together, wherein, in a nominal end position, the sealing unit and the abutment are converged to such an extent that a gap is formed between them, the gap being of a width which is less than the total thickness of ~~those~~ material layers which are intended to be sealed and fused together~~, and preferably less than the total thickness of those material layers which are intended to be sealed and fused together which is~~ obtained when the sealing unit and the abutment are moved towards one another with a force which is defined by a force-restricting coupling member that is pressurized by a fluid.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the abutment and the sealing unit are connected to a common operating unit and are disposed to be converged towards one another ~~in~~ such that both the sealing unit and the abutment are displaced with substantially the same speed profile towards one another, and that the package at the same time is disposed to be displaced in a direction transversely of the direction of movement of the sealing unit and the abutment.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the apparatus ~~which~~ is operative initially to displace the package at a higher speed in the transverse direction than the speed of the sealing unit and the abutment in their respective directions of movement, whereafter the apparatus is operative to displace the package at a lower speed in the transverse direction than the speed of the sealing unit and the abutment in their respective directions of movement, and whereafter the apparatus is operative to displace the package at a higher speed in the transverse direction than the speed of the sealing unit and the abutment in their respective directions of movement.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the operating unit comprises an interconnection member displaceable substantially transversely of ~~the~~ a direction of movement of the sealing unit and the abutment, the interconnection unit being~~, on the one hand,~~ connected to the sealing unit by the

intermediary of a first linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and ~~that of~~ the intermediary of said first and second components of the second operating element which is not connected to the sealing unit and which~~, on the other hand,~~ is connected to the first operating element by the intermediary of a second linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and the second operating element.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein the operating unit comprises an interconnection member displaceable substantially transversely of ~~the~~ a direction of movement of the sealing unit and the abutment, the interconnection unit being~~, on the one hand,~~ connected to the sealing unit by the intermediary of a first linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and ~~that of~~ the intermediary of said first and second components of the second operating element which is not connected to the sealing unit and which~~, on the other hand,~~ is connected to the first operating element by the intermediary of a second linkage which is pivotally connected to the interconnection member and the second operating element.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the second operating element is slidably connected to said at least one elongate element.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein the second operating element is slidably connected to said at least one elongate element.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein the second operating element is slidably connected to said at least one elongate element.

18. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at lest one force-restricting coupling member is disposed between the sealing unit and the first operating element.

19. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the force-restricting coupling member is configured to restrict a pushing force of the sealing unit.